

► Languages Spoken

There are about 90 languages being spoken by students in Missouri schools. While many have only a few speakers, these languages represent the linguistic and cultural heritage that has always been present in the Midwest. The following chart presents the most commonly spoken languages and their growth during the last few school years.

Top 10 languages spoken in Missouri schools

Language	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Percent Change*
1. Spanish	3,065	4,625	5,098	6,264	7,545	10,107	10,339	2%
2. Bosnian/Serbo/Croatian	1,056	1,661	2,176	2,137	2,139	2,466	1987	-19%
3. Vietnamese	938	747	760	768	844	1,080	959	-11%
4. Arabic	382	372	450	398	498	573	646	13%
5. Somali	508	367	379	437	492	489	625	28%
6. Korean	155	173	190	252	302	350	502	43%
7. Chinese	263	237	335	355	353	364	465	28%
8. Russian	153	232	266	318	347	390	453	16%
9. Farsi	-	35	53	95	224	279	273	-2%
10. Bengali	-	7	4	4	8	20	227	1,035%

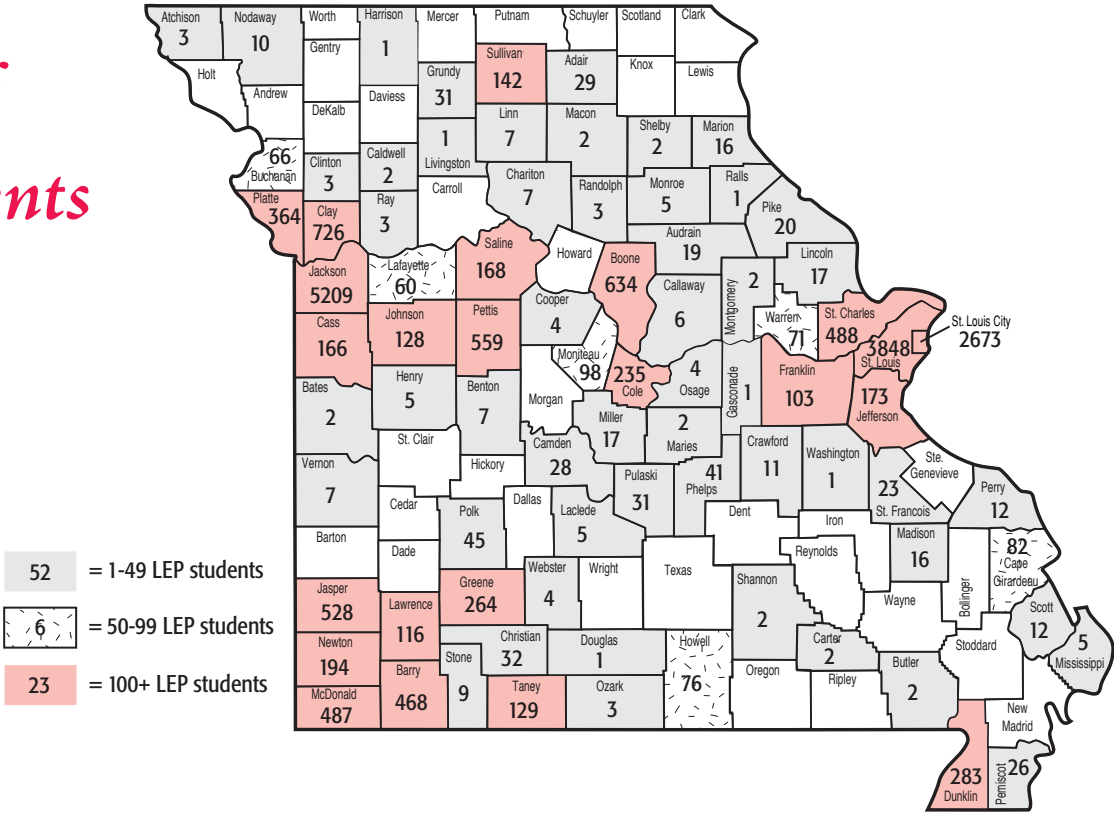
*Percent changes refer to the difference between 2004 and 2005 figures.

These language totals reflect a couple of factors — an influx of refugees and the expansion of labor attractive to migrant workers. The totals also suggest that some of the more established groups are moving on, or their children are no longer considered ELL, or both.

► Conclusion

The improved data collection of information regarding ELL students is helping the state to see where its priorities should lie. Continued rapid growth in some suburban and many rural areas requires that all schools be prepared to meet ELL students’ needs. Districts must adopt a plan to identify, assess and serve ELL students. Refer to the “Educating Linguistically Diverse Students” handbook for additional information.

Number of LEP Students by County



► Parental Legal Rights

Under Title III of the NCLB Act, schools are required to provide informed parental notification as to why a child is in need of placement in a specialized language-instruction program. Parents have the right to choose among instruction programs if more than one type is offered. They must be informed no later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year. During the school year, this time is two weeks. Parents also have the right to immediately remove their child from a program for ELL children. Schools are required to implement effective means of parental outreach to encourage parents to become informed and active participants in their child's participation in the ELL program. Since the legislation does not specify whether parents should be notified before assessing an ELL student, DESE does not require the district to seek parental authorization to test children for ELL classification. Details on parental notification are located in Appendix E of the "Educating Linguistically Diverse Students" handbook, which can be found at either <http://www.mo-mell.org/resources.htm> or at <http://dese.mo.gov/divimprove/fedprog/discretionarygrants/bilingual-esol/index.html>.

► Foreign-Exchange Students

The NCLB Act does not discourage or prevent schools from enrolling foreign-exchange students. These programs are valuable and enrich the education of all parties involved. Schools have the discretion to enroll or not enroll foreign students even though they may be treated like residents during their attendance year. The state of Missouri highly recommends that school districts enroll these students. As temporary visitors who are not entitled to receive educational services, it is understood that schools have no obligation to evaluate them for English language proficiency, but schools may do so at their discretion. Assessment results for foreign-exchange students enrolled for less than a year, even if they are Limited English Proficient, should not be included in the school-level measurement of adequate yearly progress required by the NCLB Act. Schools should review their own exchange-student policies.

► Summary Totals

Statewide ELL student count

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Percent Change*
Public schools	7,679	8,157	10,238	11,535	13,121	14,855	18,745	19,092	2%

*These figures show an increase of 2 percent in the number of ELL students identified from 2004 to 2005.

► Regional Totals

ELL students in St. Louis and Kansas City public schools

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Percent Change*
St. Louis	1,529	2,675	2,433	3,004	2,672	2,768	2,905	2,673	-8%
Kansas City	1,386	1,221	2,068	2,066	2,426	3,102	5,244	3,986	-24%

*Percent changes refer to the difference between 2004 and 2005 figures.

Below are a few of the districts that experienced high growth in enrolled ELL students for various reasons, including their location as suburban and/or near processing-plant districts and/or near heavy farming areas.

ELL students enrolled in some high-growth districts

School District	2004	2005	Percent Change
Columbia	331	625	89%
Sedalia 200	192	362	89%
Rockwood R-VI	284	439	55%
Kirksville	11	28	155%
Kennett	15	79	427%
Hickman Mills	244	373	53%
Bolivar R-I	5	17	240%
Louisiana R-II	7	20	186%
Mehlville R-IX	327	449	37%

Factors contributing to the continued rise in the number of students from non-English language backgrounds include the growth of poultry processing, meatpacking and agricultural jobs; the enrollment of foreign students at institutions of higher education; the growth of Missouri's economy; and the internationalization of business.

► Implementing the ELL Program

School districts are required to hire highly qualified teachers to ensure quality instruction. The local context determines whether a school needs a paraprofessional under the supervision of a certified teacher or a full-time ESOL-endorsed teacher. The ELL coordinator and the program implementer must work closely to address the ELL students' needs. Districts enrolling 20 or more ELL students must hire a full-time ESOL-endorsed teacher. When enrolling more than 20 ELL students, the district must strictly follow the local student/teacher ratio. (General considerations on class size can be found at <http://dese.mo.gov/divimprove/sia/msip/faq&answers.html>.) Districts hiring classroom paraprofessionals must be prepared to hire ESOL-endorsed teachers as soon as the district enrolls 20 ELL students. A paraprofessional can be supported to meet the credentials leading to endorsement with Title III or other local funds. All students needing services must be included in the program. There should not be a waiting list of ELL students in a district. ELL students cannot be retained solely because of language barriers. Grades represent what the student understands about the subject matter, not the level of English language proficiency. Professional-development programs are available at <http://www.mo-mell.org> or from an instructional specialist for technical assistance in a local capacity building. The success of a program may be tied to how often districts evaluate their programs and address weaknesses. Continuing the education of program personnel could be helpful in bringing in new and fresh ideas, and talking to experienced neighboring districts might be the best strategy a district can use.

► Service Expectations

School districts are responsible for providing a language-instruction educational program that increases the English proficiency and academic achievement of ELL students. Whether districts receive funds from the state or federal level, ELL students should be held to the state academic-content and academic-achievement standards established for all children. DESE has no mandated curriculum to serve ELL students. Through the MELL program, DESE can assist districts in developing a local plan for educating ELL students that maintains compliance with state and federal requirements while allowing for local variations. Districts have the students' results in terms of language abilities, which are key factors in determining what kind of services to provide and how often to deliver them. The expectation is that programs will enable children to speak, write, listen, read and comprehend the English language and meet challenging state academic-content and academic-achievement standards. Schools are required to conduct a two-year follow-up after a child is no longer receiving services. The "Educating Linguistically Diverse Students" handbook contains expectations and a checklist to help districts evaluate their programs — what can be done for all ELL students and what is specific to each child. Suggestions in the handbook include instructional approaches, program evaluations and cultural considerations. The bottom line is that districts are looking at whether an ELL student is able to access the school's curriculum with all of its cultural and social implications. School district policies, resources and context will influence the type of services, and the district context will determine the approach and content as stated. However, the language-instruction curriculum must be tied to scientifically based research on teaching ELL students. It must have demonstrated effectiveness, which involves the application of rigorous, systematic and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to educational activities and programs. For the complete definition, refer to ESEA section 9101 (37), page 969, which can be found at <http://dese.mo.gov/divimprove/fedprog/discretionarygrants>.

► U.S. Residency and Immigration

The Supreme Court ruled in Plyler v. Doe (1982) that legal residency in the United States is not a requirement for enrolling in a public school. Schools should not explicitly or implicitly ask for any information related to U.S. residency, including Social Security numbers, passports, visas, green cards, etc. Even if volunteered by parents, it is advisable to politely refuse such information. A student cannot be denied admission to a school or participation in a program based on the student's undocumented status. Such discrimination would be a denial of the equal protection of the law in violation of the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution.



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